

An Essay

Proposed

on

Amnorrhoea,

by

William W. Wilkins,

of

Virginia.

Jth L. Roberts

Philadelphia October 25th 1824

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On the ~~presence~~ or absence of the menses.

This disease is placed by Dr. Cullen, under the class
Lues, and order, Episcleosis. He has also divided it into three
species. 1st *Emoncio mensium*, where the menses do not appear
at their usual period. 2nd *Suppression mensium*, when after
the menses have appeared, but from some other cause
than pregnancy, they have ceased. 3rd *Haemorrhoea diffi-*
cilis, or ~~haemorrhoea difficilis~~ when the flow is in too ✓
small a quantity, and attended with pain.

In this dissertation, I shall treat, only of the two first,
that is, Retention, and Suppression.

There are three different states, in which the uterus does
not take on its specific action, when the patient has ar-
rived at the proper age.

1st When there is no development, either of the uterus, or
the parts which closely sympathize with it, at the pe-
riod, that it is about to take on the action of menstruating.

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the menstrual fluid. In this case there should be no interference, unless the general health of the patient was affected. But if the friends of the patient should still urge, that something ought to be done; and it is found that by a noncompliance, they would apply to some person less scrupulous about giving violent medicines, which might prove dangerous. In that case, it may be advisable to temporize, by giving blood pills colored with Rhubarb, and by that means, give nature an opportunity of fulfilling her office.

2^d When the development is too slow. In this condition, the system is found in two different states. In one, the patient is subject to flushings of the face, evening fatigue, complaints of sickness at the stomach, vertigo, pain in the head, back, limbs &c. When these symptoms are present, the lowest and the other antipathetic remedies are to be employed, until the system is reduced to the proper standard. After the phlegmatic action has abated, and the menses should not appear, I would then use the

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Mild preparations, so as gently to stimulate the uterus, by its
 close sympathy with the rectum. If this should fail in pro-
 ducing the desired effect, I would resort to some of the
 more powerfull Emmenagogues, as the same, such as col-
 umbic root, &c.

In the other state of the system, the condition is the reverse
 of the last. It has been called Chlorosis, by some authors, and
Lymphogumma, and Cachexia, by others. Some of the follow-
 ing symptoms, almost always, characterize this disease.

It begins with an unpleasant sense of the heat, some consti-
 tution, loss of appetite, a feeling of debility, and weakness, desire
 to retire to solitude, and a desire for indigestible substances
 as starchy pieces of pabulum, &c. to these succeed, a pale, sallow, or
 greenish complexion, a pain of the head, and throbbing, palpi-
 tation of the heart, dyspnoea, hurried respiration, from
 slight causes, syncope, symptoms of hysteria, a sense of
 suffocation, and finally, swelling of the abdomen, and oedema
 of the lower extremities.

These symptoms have frequently been erroneously attributed

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to the abuse of the menses. Many ignorant, and inexperienced persons, acting on this supposition, have given stimulating and heating medicines, as emmenagogues with the greatest injury to the health of their patients.

Various are the theories, which have been broached to account for the appearance of Chlorosis, about the period, at which the menstrual discharge usually makes its appearance.

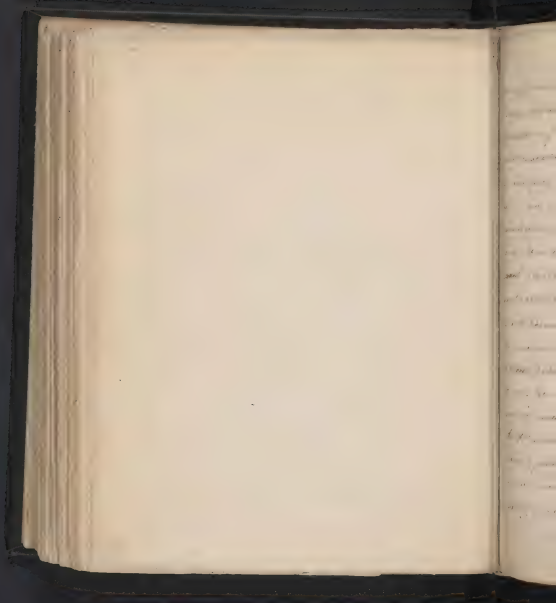
DeCullen has accounted it, to a certain state of the ovaries, and to a defective communication of a due stimulus from the genital organs, on which the tone, and tension of the whole system depend. There is no doubt that it sometimes arises from these causes; how could we otherwise account for the fact, that the flow has been produced by the act of coition. Although this may sometimes be the case, yet I think, it is very rarely, owing to these causes; but, almost always to a disordered state of the sympathetic apparatus, and consequent congestion of the bowels.

As I am indebted to Dr. Hamilton, for this review of the subject, I shall take the liberty of copying some of his

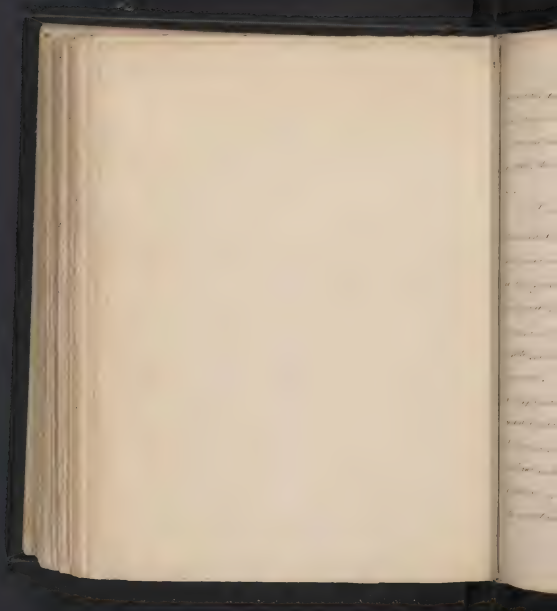
[Faint, mostly illegible handwriting on the left page of an open manuscript. The text appears to be a continuous paragraph or a series of connected thoughts, written in a cursive hand typical of the 18th or 19th century.]

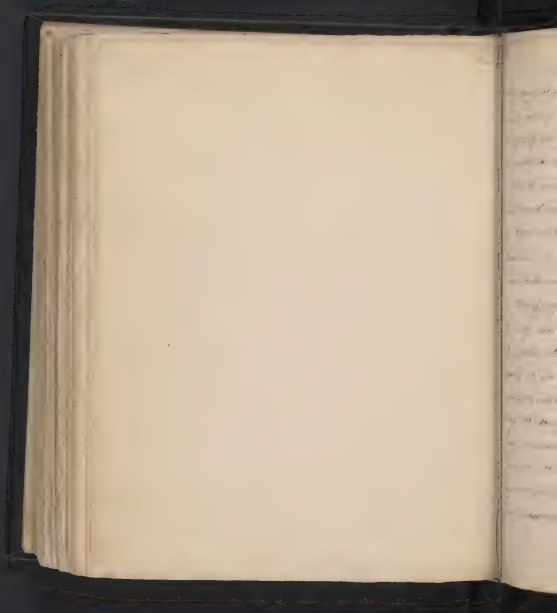
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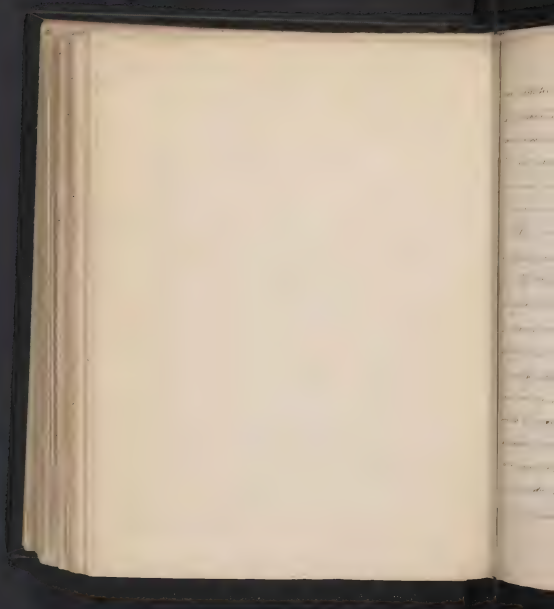


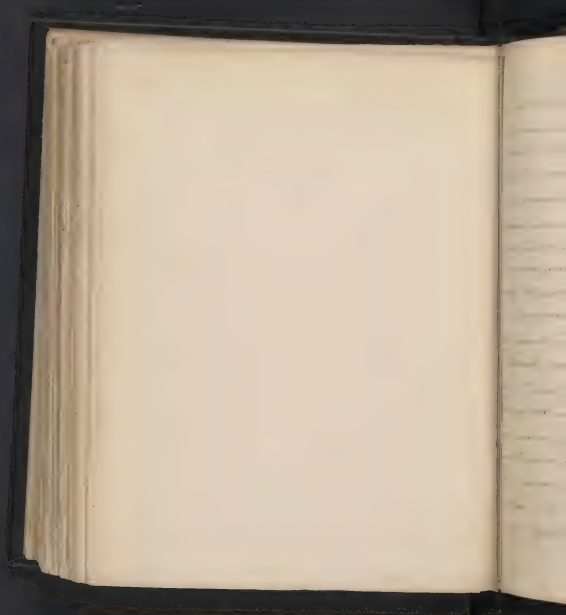






any interference, that she is not just treated, and generally, begin
 her treatment, by considering the weakness the symptoms could
 be next, in which one to remove the state of debility, and
 the symptoms of dyspepsia, which accompanies it. This is to
 be done, in the application of all those remedies, that are
 found to be useful in that disease, and by particular attention
 to the diet. I follow with these medicines,
 I would pump almost daily, with the preparation of them
 with those of iron, or with Rhubarb, I would use at the
 same time, the mineral, warm mineral waters. The
 treatment of Chlorosis. If these should fail, I would re-
 sort to some of those medicines, that are thought to act upon
 directly on the uterus. It has been that, what, whether any
 medicines do act specifically on that organ. This is a point
 I shall not attempt, to determine, for even if I could solve
 the question, it would be of no medical utility. It is
 sufficient for me to know, that they act on it in some





than whom, there can be no higher authority.

He also recommends the Sanguinea Salina or Savins, very highly. In the case in which the Modesto failed, I succeeded completely, with the oil of Savine continued for some time.

A possible remedy of De Deves is, the Volatile Tinct of Cassia-guinacum. When he has administered it, he says he has never found it to fail. I have not used it myself, but from the high authority by which it is recommended, I have no doubt of its efficacy, when properly administered.

Dr Physick speaks very highly of the Helleborus Nig. It great many other medicines have had their advocates as emmenagogues, and no doubt they have sometimes proved successful, when properly used. Too, as in other classes of medicines, there has been a fashion in the choice of emmenagogues, and first one is at the head, then another, according as they happen to be applied with judgment.

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In this disease the state of the system is to be attended to, as much as in any other catarrhs, and in proportion, as we perceive these remedies with a due consideration to this circumstance, so will be our success. If practitioners would sit on their principles, I think we should hear much less complaint of their uncertainty for the future.

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